Interview with Rozanne L. Ridgway

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Women Ambassadors Series

AMBASSADOR ROZANNE L. RIDGWAY

Interviewed by: Willis Armstrong

Initial interview date: June 4, 1991

Q: I am delighted to have a chance to record your views about the Foreign Service, how you got into it, what you found attractive, what you found difficult, and anything you choose to say. We have an hour and a half worth of tape so tell me first how did you happen to get into the Foreign Service?

RIDGWAY: Entirely by accident. I was always interested in political science but I didn't know what to do with it besides teach in the late '50s. Certainly no one was running around counseling young women on any other kinds of careers. But about the mid-'50s Life Magazine did a series on ten women in interesting positions, quite ahead of its time actually. One of them was Patricia Byrne. She was at that time, as a graduate of Beloit, which was very much like the school that I was at, a vice consul in Vientiane in something that the magazine described as Foreign Service, capital F, capital S. And as I learned about Foreign Service, as is so often the case, I began to see references to it in other places and realized it was also the same as what the magazines called “career diplomacy”. And I began to learn about the Foreign Service exam. Finally, one day in my junior year, a Foreign Service Officer on leave did one of those things that I subsequently

learned the Department always did. He gave a little briefing at my college on the Foreign Service, and brought with him a lot of application forms for the examination.

Q: This was Macalester College?

RIDGWAY: No, Hamline, down the street. It's a mile down the street from Macalester. So I took the exam, and passed it between my junior and senior years. I still didn't know a lot beyond what I'd read in the magazines, or the kinds of things that were part of the description of Pat Byrne's career. I came into the Service right after college.

Q: That's remarkable. Very few people do that.

RIDGWAY: That's right. I was still 21 years of age, and I didn't have any idea about most of the jobs I subsequently held in the Service—from answering public correspondence to issuing visas and passports to personnel work and a large local personnel staff in Manila—I had no idea of those components of the Foreign Service. And in fact, if you had asked me, “what did I expect to do in the Foreign Service?” I wouldn't have been able to answer the question. In some respects I would have said, “well, whatever it is, it isn't teaching,” “it isn't research toward a Ph.D.” I found I wasn't interested in life in the stacks. I wanted to be more operational and I think that's really why my career, even from the outset, in what others would have said were positions not close to the making of foreign policy, was never a disappointment to me.

Q: Did you have any training period in Washington after you graduated from college?

RIDGWAY: I did. The A-100 course at that time was 16 weeks long. So, I graduated something like the 4th of June 1957, packed a big trunk with all of the kinds of things that college students have, which isn't much, and came to Washington and was sworn in on the 12th of June 1957 and immediately entered the A-100 course from which I then left in September. So 16 weeks.

Q: And what did the A-100 course cover? I was a lateral transfer. I never took any of these courses.

RIDGWAY: I'm not sure. For me, I had never lived away from home except for one semester here in Washington at American University as part of an exchange program that involved schools of about the same size as my own. It was a small four-year liberal arts college tucked away somewhere out of the mainstream, and the Washington Semester Program at American University, which continues today, was about as adventurous as my school got in that kind of thing. So I had never lived away from home and I was asked at the time that the Foreign Service appointment was offered to me, in the spring of '57, whether I wanted to go overseas immediately or stay in Washington. I didn't expect the question so I hadn't thought about it. My instinct immediately was to say, “Washington,” and I'm awfully glad that I did. I had to learn to live alone—or live away from home—I certainly didn't live alone, who could afford it at that time?

But the A-100 course then, for me, was sort of a different experience. I don't remember anything from it in terms of its introduction through organization charts, and foreign policy discussions. I do remember a couple of things though, Bill, that have become part of my sort of story-telling repertoire. The Foreign Service at that time was really just coming out of its somewhat traditional mode of students from large universities with some foreign language experience. It was just completing the Wriston program, and I think the Foreign Service really didn't know, as an institution, what it was going to be, or who the people were going to be, for—let's call them—the successor generation, successor to that group that came in after a World War II experience. And that previous group by and large, I think, came from prestigious universities and had at least some foreign experience. I'm probably more typical now of what the Foreign Service became in the '60s and '70s than I was of the Foreign Service of the '50s.

But, in any case, I came to town and I used the period to learn to be on my own, to be an adult, to be a non- student. And the Foreign Service was still acting as it always had.

There was a reception (I've never forgotten this) at 1800 G Street—I remember that used to be the Foreign Service Club or something—for the A-100 course. We had probably all been together at that stage for a week, and people had all of these illustrious backgrounds and things. I went to the reception, and people were standing around with martinis, and some had Manhattans. I didn't come from a protected background—from Minnesota people probably drank whiskey sours or Tom and Gerries, or something of that sort - so I had a Manhattan and I listened as people talked, and they were all very much at ease socially, and they were playing one-upmanship. “Have you read the latest by David Reisman?” “What did you think of the Samuelson treatment of such and such?” My college was so small, David Reisman had not gotten there yet, and didn't offer a sociology major (I must say, to its credit).

Q: I don't see anything wrong with that.

RIDGWAY: I don't either. We didn't use Samuelson as the economics textbook. I went back from that reception wondering in the back of my mind whether this was going to work at all; and concluded that either I was going to make it, or they were going to make it; but I didn't see how any institution could really successfully contain both types.

Q: That's a very interesting observation.

RIDGWAY: I was very uncomfortable in the A-100 Course. It had none of the things that I thought were interesting. I was not accustomed to what I would call student union/student politics at a large university, of fraternities, of whatever. I'm sure I'm misjudging a lot of my colleagues but the atmosphere was brand new to me, and one in which I was very, very uncomfortable. I sat quietly through the 16 weeks trying to learn, trying to watch, and at the end of the 16 weeks— since I have seen my file, I know what the conclusion was—the Foreign Service was very skeptical about me. I was ranked in the third quartile of the class, and received, as an onward assignment, the worst job by reputation and tradition, the worst job that went to the class, which was in the Office of The International

Educational Exchange Service. I wrote letters in answer to public correspondence, was not involved in programs, at 19th and K, as far away from State as you could get at that time.

I, in turn, was sort of skeptical about the Service, understandably. So at the end of 16 weeks we sort of began a testing period with skepticism on both sides. That's what I remember of that summer of 1957. I thought most of what I saw was incredibly false. I was quite unfamiliar with those kinds of games, and I wasn't prepared to play them.

Q: Some of those games are very defensive.

RIDGWAY: Very defensive. I certainly understand all of that now. I don't know the female of the old phrase about being a rube from the country, and I came from a very sophisticated family, had done a lot of reading and I had been encouraged to go wherever my mind took me, but I certainly did not have the social background that legend said was so necessary. I didn't play bridge. I hadn't read this list of ponderous authors—and I can tell you to this day I haven't read some of them.

Q: Well, so what? There's a job to do, so you got on with the job.

RIDGWAY: One of the reasons, later in my career, I never joined the Womens' Action Organization or any of the others, was that I think you have to be pushed by anger to make such clear-cut statements, and want to pound on the table, and go through a list of wrongs, and I was never able to compile a list of wrongs. I didn't come out of my family with a sense of having had to fight my way. I had two brothers, one on either side of me, and if I wanted to be a fireman, I could be a fireman. If I wanted to be a doctor, I could be a doctor. I was never told girls did this, and boys did that. So that was not a part of my background. And my early career, which many people look at as the kind of early career that would make one angry, in fact didn't play out that way.

I went into an office made up of some wonderful people. You may know them—not by name, by group—they had been in the Office of War Information. They were either OWI,

or staffed OSS, and as State grew in that period of the late 40s and through the 50s, and went on through AID and USIA and all of those things, these people were senior civil servants who had come into this right after the war. My bosses were all women who had been associated with the war effort. They were women who took time to teach. So I learned how to be a part of a staff. I learned standards. I already had academic standards, it isn't that I had to be told how to do my best work. But I had to learn how to translate that into a bureaucracy and I needed people who were willing to help. I did not come out of that experience with sterling efficiency reports. They were tough raters. They didn't write anything down that they hadn't talked to me about beforehand; about public speaking, about what you could or could not say over the phone to a public when you're a government employee and might be held responsible for what you had to say. This wasn't to encourage obfuscation, but responsibility. So I spent two years with some wonderful, old- line, civil servants who were proud of public service, who maintained standards, and who were willing to take the time to train me.

I went from there—clearly the Service still very, very skeptical about me—I went from that job to be the third personnel officer out of three in the Embassy in Manila. And as you can imagine in those days, administrative sections had a man Counselor for Administration, and then everybody else was female; disbursing officers, personnel officers, and GSOs. But again, this was a group of women who, if you looked at their backgrounds, had come into government service during the war years, and either through the Civil Service program, or the Wriston program, had been brought into the Foreign Service officer corps. They were heavy in number in administration, and in consular services. The junior officer rotation program in Manila stopped when I arrived. There was a meeting. The men decided they did not want me on the rotation, and the rotation program was stopped.

Q: Who decided that? The Ambassador?

RIDGWAY: They all did. The Ambassador, Chip Bohlen, George Abbott, Ray Ylitalo, a whole bunch of them. Henry Brody. You don't want to be bothered. I forget who was the

chief of the political section because, again, they never became a part of my life in Manila. They saw to it that I was sort of off in this corner doing administrative work. But take a look at Manila there were 900 Americans out there—Veterans Administration, American Battle Monuments Commission, USIA...even today the numbers are high.

Q: It's the biggest embassy we have, isn't it?

RIDGWAY: It was.

Q: It still is. I was out there in '81 and people told me it was still the biggest embassy we had.

RIDGWAY: Mexico may have gotten larger, if you count the DEA folks running all over. A huge embassy. The capacity of that many Americans to produce personnel problems, I learned, was unlimited.

Q: Beyond belief.

RIDGWAY: ...beyond belief. And because the rotation program stopped, and I had to do two years in personnel—I did one year doing American personnel, and one year doing Foreign Service nationals, I learned a lot about the regulations, I learned a lot about how you deal, from such a far distance, with a Washington bureaucracy that is bound by regulations. It's not that they're hidebound intellectually. They've got regulations. I learned how you could approach that bureaucracy when its regulations, either alone or in combination, were unreasonable. I found there were sensible people back there. You just had to know how to deal with them. But once again, I was in a woman's world. But I was in the world of women, a combination of women in the administrative section and the consular section, who saw another woman coming on board and could have reacted, Bill, with a great sense of jealousy. I was half their age. I was an examination entry FSO with a future in front of me that was different from their own, a Service in front of me that was different than the Service they had entered. This was the days of eight grades. They

were mostly 6s. I arrived as an 8, became a 7, but clearly even with a mediocre career, I would pass them and their expectations. I did not encounter either that resentment or jealousy. Once again, I had a community that folded in around me, saw to it that I was part of the community, even though I had sort of been separated out from the traditional establishment. They taught me a lot. I think I taught them a lot also because I was so much different than they.

And when I went on from that experience with a richness of understanding about people overseas, and how embassies really work, I went off to Palermo as a vice consul.

Q: Really. My wife was once a vice consul in Palermo.

RIDGWAY: And you recall in those days...these were the days in which the regional bureaus had a lot to say in where you went. And the regional personnel officers were women. This is still the old Foreign Service. Great names: Evelyn Blue, Berny Whitfield; and Evelyn is still alive at Columbia Plaza. I see her, she still remembers every part of my early career. But I came out of Manila, passed on favorably to that group of regional personnel officers, and went off to Palermo to be a vice consul, went through Italian—I had already passed the language in Spanish—took Italian; had a completely different experience from that large Manila experience a huge institution to a consular experience. I mean it was life for two years lived in Italian; a small group of people working very closely with Foreign Service nationals, again on these tough questions—the very human questions of passports, and people in jail, and deaths, and social security benefits, a very substantial part of our work overseas. Good supervisors again, still a lot of women around, a few more men evaluating my...

Q: How big a post is Palermo?

RIDGWAY: At that time, about fourteen Americans ranged in age from 25 to about 62. I think we counted at one time that eleven of us were quite fluent in Italian, we all got along very, very well. It was a very easy time.

Q: What years were these?

RIDGWAY: '62-'64.

Q: Louise was there '49-'50. It was a much smaller post. She had a tyrannical boss and got herself transferred.

RIDGWAY: I never ran into that.

Q: In a tiny post that can happen.

RIDGWAY: I have given you three assignments in which experts today, analyzing why women have been held back in the Service, would say that each—if you went by percentages—should have harmed my career, and not a one of them did. Each produced growth. Each gave me an experience which later on, frankly, gave me an advantage over people whose careers were not broad enough. I knew how to work. I didn't know all of those good things were coming of it. I had no way of knowing that people, as supervisors, didn't routinely behave in this constructive fashion. I had no idea that these other things were happening to people. And I started telling this to explain why, later in my career, I didn't join the Womens' Action Organization, and things of that sort. I opted out of all the class action suits, because my experience simply was so different. And having come in at twenty-one, and become quickly skeptical about the Service as the Service became skeptical about me, I came out of this process of Washington- Manila-Palermo in 1964 just before my 29th birthday, much more mature, more confident. The Service, I think, felt different about me. Those were the days of rankings from l to 6, I don't think you could look at my file and find an awful lot of 6s.

It turned out I had a realistic file—you could have those in those days...

Q: We used to do honest reports.

RIDGWAY: They were honest reports, but they were also dealt with a little more honestly. There weren't the other kinds of pressures which relate to American social objectives and I understand it, but you have to understand that's not evaluating performance. That is a civil rights system.

Q: That's a value judgment about somebody else's value judgment.

RIDGWAY: That's right. But in '64, after the inspectors had come through Palermo, and we had the old inspection things in those days, they, I guess you didn't get to see the reports, had written that it was time for me to get a political assignment.

Q: You didn't get to see the inspectors?

RIDGWAY: I saw the inspectors. I didn't see their written report. You didn't see the reports. But they would have been writing back, once again, to that sort of network, and there were networks before people knew there were networks.

Q: It was just their ordinary way of doing business.

RIDGWAY: ...ordinary way of doing business. And there were all of those regional personnel officers who knew me, because I had been part of their group, and I think a recommendation went in that it was time for me to get a political assignment. I was assigned in June of '64 as political officer in The Hague—number three political officer in The Hague. A lot of circumstances that don't have to be a part of this discussion kept me from getting to The Hague. Circumstances, by the way, all of my own making. Just quickly, I had planned for home leave from Palermo; I got out to the airport to go on home leave and transfer to The Hague; Alitalia had a 24-hour strike, I went back to stay with a friend to

take off the next day, and while I was there the Department called to say my assignment had been changed to a direct transfer, and I was to go directly to The Hague. I would not. I wanted to go home, planned to go home, my family was expecting me; so the Consulate General did not put the call through and said that the plane had taken off.

I left the next day and went straight to Minnesota, and received a letter saying they were terribly sorry, they had missed me in Palermo, the assignment to The Hague had been changed to direct transfer and since I was in Minnesota my assignment was broken and somebody else was going to be political officer in The Hague. It didn't really bother me.

Q: A peculiar set of circumstances, wasn't it?

RIDGWAY: Yes. So I waited out there in Minnesota and finally got a letter from the Department about the beginning of September '64—I was on home leave and annual leave and all of that—saying, as a result of all of these things—and I suspect the Department knew that I was the architect of most of my not being in The Hague—your assignment now will be to Washington and you have been assigned as a political officer in the Office of NATO Political Affairs whose office director is George Vest. Now, anybody who knows the Service can hear a break when you hear a break. So that's what I did. In '64 I went to Washington and I joined the staff in the office—known at that time as Atlantic Political Military Affairs. I don't know the precise numbers of people but I can sure give you the proportions. I would say, out of a staff of 20, 19 reached ambassadorial rank over the years. It was a high-powered office. David Popper was the office director, Ron Spiers was the deputy director, George Vest was the director of my NATO Political Office. We were three officers, one was George, one was John Gunther Dean, and I was the third. There was an office of military affairs. The number two there was David Aaron. There was an office of nuclear affairs, the number two there was Mark Palmer. We had this wonderful office in which...

Q: A great office. I knew that office fairly well because I was Office Director in EUR.

RIDGWAY: WE?

Q: No, it was called BNA. I had Britain, Scandinavia, Ireland, plus Malta and the West Indies. I was there from '62 to '64 and I went to several NATO meetings as a member of delegations.

RIDGWAY: I joined that office and again, great teachers.

Q: A fine lot of people.

RIDGWAY: Fine lot of people, but again with time to teach. And David—I've told this story of David Popper in public, the day the Academy gave me its diplomatic award David introduced me; it was 30 years later. I went to work on a few little NATO things; what was then called the NATO Parliamentarians Assembly and the American Association of Young Political Leaders, and I did the day-to-day backstopping of the NATO councils on information and cultural relations. You wouldn't say they were major but they were mine; they had responsibilities; they had calendars; they had deadlines. And then there was some writing to be done, and the first piece of reflective writing that I ever did went up through the system and got to David, and David wrote on the top, “This won't do. Please see me.” So I went in to see him. Now it takes time for supervisors to do this, and to do it in a way that doesn't intimidate you. He said there were different styles of writing, and this particular effort, which was a private monthly letter to the Political Military officers and the DCMs out in the field, was to tell them what they don't already know. So you can discuss trends, you can tell them why they're reading this, offer some insight, identify issues; but what you have done is to tell them everything that's in here, that they already know. There's a meeting that's going to take place, and this is on the agenda. Tell them whether there are going to be problems with the agenda, whether there's going to be a particular American issue, or a German issue, things of that sort.

Q: This was a classified paper?

RIDGWAY: Yes. So I took my little article, which was sort of newspaper who-when-where-why and how, and I went back and talked to George because obviously I was disappointed that I hadn't gotten A+ on my first effort. I talked to George Vest, thought about what they wanted, re-wrote it, and it passed. I don't know that it became all that much better. I think they may have recognized the effort and the progress.

Q: But it was re-focused for the purpose for which it was needed.

RIDGWAY: ...this audience and that audience, and what people know and what they don't know. So, once again, I had a period of instruction, three years of learning from people of already great achievement, who were willing to take time. And I happen to know they did that for others too, myself, and Mark, and David Aaron, we were all junior at the time, FSO6s and 5s. And these fellows felt a responsibility to bring you along and give you enough to work with, and let you go as far as you could go.

Q: David Popper was always a very diligent director of anything. He's a very diligent guy, he's a good friend and I always appreciated his vigor, and his...

RIDGWAY: I was working one Saturday in the office— because I didn't know what I was doing—this was NATO's covering of major nuclear issues at the time, and had the Skybolt beforehand, and this was the time of the Claude B. Rickets, and the mixed manning of...anything to give “the Germans a sense of participation.”

Q: I had the British desk for two years, and then after that I was in London. I know exactly what you're talking about.

RIDGWAY: So I'm coming from Personnel; public correspondence; and visa work; and I arrive September '64 and the then NATO Secretary General has just been through town; a long bunch of appointments with a great stack of memcons, and I am being asked to summarize the memcons in a then old fashioned form of an airgram to advise the post on what was going on. But if you don't know the subject it's really a tough one. So I was in the

office on a Saturday trying to learn, and then trying to make sense...either a Saturday or a Sunday because it was a battle to cram all that in and be effective immediately. Well, there was a lot of noise in the outer office, and finally two men walked in and said, “You can't be here.” I said, “What do you mean I can't be here?” They had the blueprint in front of them. They said, “This isn't an office. This is an expansion well for an additional elevator. This is an elevator shaft.” And I said, “Well, it may be, but as you can see, it's an office for two people.” It was an office in a little cubby hole about four levels back from any outside light in an elevator shaft according to the blueprint.

Q: This is in...

RIDGWAY: At State, in the new building, at the juncture of 2 and 5 on the sixth floor. I tell the story because later, again, so many people want to look at my career and try and draw lessons from it. And I don't know what the lessons would be, but later, when so many of the class action suits came up that the women joined—again, I couldn't associate with them because I didn't know what they were talking about. One talked about the inadequacy of office space, about the fact that even the waste baskets given to women were less elegant than the waste baskets given to men. All I could remember was that tough job of that paper. I didn't know I was sitting in an elevator shaft. I didn't even care, and I have no idea to this day what kind of a waste basket I had. I was totally removed from this angry world in which people seemed to have been keeping long lists of offenses. I never had time to look at them. Now, was I being discriminated against at that time? I have no idea because I could have been discriminated against for a whole lot of things, starting out by being very young, and very inexperienced. And at the time that I got the experience, the break came. And it came once again into just a very special group of people.

Q: There are a lot of very special people in the Foreign Service, and there have been, and there still are I'm sure. How long were you in that office?

RIDGWAY: From 1964 to 1967, which included then the period of the French withdrawal from NATO; the collapse of the MLF; all kinds of things that were happening; the U.S. relationship with France; the bilateral relationship which, of course, we didn't deal with out of our office but which we worked in association with that group. The front office in EUR at that time, Walt Stoessel, Bob Schaetzel; the staff aide was Larry Eagleburger. I'm sure others today who are beginning their careers, or who are at the mid-point, are also collecting those same kinds of associations but it was really a first class outfit.

Q: We used to think about Schaetzel, he was running his own Atlantic bureau within the European Bureau. You were part of his Atlantic bureau?

RIDGWAY: That's right.

Q: Schaetzel and I are old friends. He was staff assistant to Willard Thorp in the economic bureau beginning in '46, and he and I went on the delegation to London for the first ITO meeting. But Bob was a very determined man in this. Do you remember the time...oh, you weren't there because I was there, when de Gaulle turned the British down on the Common Market?

RIDGWAY: No.

Q: That was really a shattering blow to the Atlantists in the bureau, they were all busy calling BNA saying, "What do I do now?" The rest of us laughed at them because Frank Meloy, who was running WE and I had BNA, we went to a staff meeting and he said, "Were you surprised?" I said, "No, of course not." I had just been in Paris and London and I knew the British were not going to get in, the French weren't going to let them, that's all. But the Schaetzel crowd would never believe it. On the military and the NATO side, there was more sense. But on the Common Market side, they were wrapped up in...

RIDGWAY: They were designing the new Europe.

Q: They were designing the new world, and when it didn't fit their design it was a real traumatic experience.

RIDGWAY: I think we're back to some of that today.

Q: Well, yes, but you know, you've always got to be realistic about what the other people thought. I mean I sat on the British desk and I wrote a memorandum—this is your review, not mine—but I wrote a memorandum about Skybolt when it was being considered. I sent it to Dean Rusk and I said, "Look, don't think this is a simple choice of weapons. The British have shot their wad on this, and a decision not to go ahead with it will be seen as a decision to destroy their independent nuclear..." Some six months later Dick Newhouse called me and he said, "I read all the file on this at the request of Kennedy, and you're the only guy that was right." I said, "I don't give a damn about being right, it didn't work."

RIDGWAY: Your mentioning Dean Rusk reminds me of an experience in those days that I never forgot, tried to incorporate myself, and I think in fact succeeded in incorporating myself and also watched George Shultz use. As far as I was from the seventh floor, on those occasions when, for example, Jack Javits would want to come to talk to Rusk about what is now called the North Atlantic Assembly—then known as the NATO Parliamentarians Conference—and the American Congressmen were leaving to go off to Paris and would like to stop by and see the Secretary before they left. I would prepare the famous "talking points" for the Secretary. The combination of the attitude in RPM, in which people did not feel threatened by giving juniors opportunities, and Rusk's own attitude, meant that I got to go and be the note taker for the Secretary at those meetings. I began to learn by being allowed, as the most immediate action officer, whatever the grade, to be a part of that seventh floor operation, and to acquire that kind of experience. Not every Secretary has done that. Not every office is made up of people confident enough to allow their juniors their little window of taking notes for a meeting with Jack Javits, or sitting in on some public delegation that might come in to see the Secretary. So often you'll see seniors competing with each other as to who is going to get into the Secretary's office, and that

just wasn't the case in RPM. So often you'll see a Secretary of State not wanting a lot of clutter with junior people sitting around. And how else are you going to learn unless you can sit at the end of the table and watch these things? Shultz did include juniors. I always, subsequently, saw to it that the immediate action officer was always part of whoever sat in on my meetings. Being part of it began to introduce me then to real diplomacy. It was a wonderful time.

Q: The way Secretaries work.

RIDGWAY: The way Secretaries work, and made them human as well.

Q: I knew Dean Rusk pretty well, and he was a fine person, a fine person to work for.

RIDGWAY: It's not contradictory then that he ended up teaching, leading his students down at Georgia. Over the years he has called me to ask if I would meet with students in his law school on international affairs. We've had some chats and things of that sort. I used to see him on the Law of the Sea advisory group over the years, and whether he remembered me or not, I would say we had met in those old days and he always felt free to call to ask me to do those things. There was a commitment to the next generation that reflected a confidence that, frankly, I find absent today.

Q: And he was always loyal to everybody in the establishment. I went to see him after he got down there. I was down in Georgia on some business and I went out to see him and had a nice conversation. He was always delighted, but sometimes he had to be corrected. One time he was going to Ottawa—I had just come back from Ottawa—he was going to Ottawa to play some golf at Montebello, and he was going to see Lester Pearson. He called me in to say he was going to do this, and I was just taking over the British-Canadian desk. I said, "Are you going to call on Howard Green?" He said, "Oh, hell no, I don't like him." I said, "Look, you are Secretary of State. You can't go to Ottawa without calling on the Foreign Minister. I don't care whether you're paying your own way, or what, you've got

to go see Howard Green. I know you won't like it, I wouldn't like it either. I can't stand the man but you've got to do it." He said, "Oh, all right." So he did it. He was wonderful.

RIDGWAY: Something else that happened in those days, Bill. In the autumn of '64, about October or so, I was already in RPM, I had a call from Margaret Joy Tibbetts who was going out to Norway as ambassador. And she said, "You may hear this from the system, so I want you to hear it from me." She said, "Ever since I was named as ambassador the system," whatever it was at that time, "has been trying to staff up embassy Oslo with every woman it can find, and they want me to have a..."

Q: This is Margaret Tibbetts?

RIDGWAY: This is Margaret Tibbetts. "...and furthermore they want me to have a special assistant, and they think you should be it." She said, "I want you to know that I've told them, number one, I don't need a special assistant, I know how to be an ambassador, I know what this is all about. And if I did, I would not choose a young woman because you're not going to take these rare women who are around the Service and send them all to Oslo." So she called and told me that.

Q: That's absolutely characteristic...

RIDGWAY: ...characteristic of Tibby. And she said, "I would hope at the end of your assignment in RPM, if I have an appropriate position in Oslo, that you would consider it favorably, but I want you to know that I have said no to this." So in 1967 as I came up for reassignment there was a position as political officer available in Oslo. By no small chance Joan Clark was EUR personnel at the time, and I went to Oslo, served with Tibby as a junior as political officer.

Q: I didn't realize you had served with Tibby. She visited us in London while she was ambassador there.

RIDGWAY: I was with her then for two years between '67 and '69, and then she left and was poorly treated by the system, and quit in 1971.

Q: She was later Deputy Assistant Secretary in EUR.

RIDGWAY: After they took all of the good stuff out of the position.

Q: Oh, did they?

RIDGWAY: Oh, yes. So she usually sat behind the desk with her feet in an open drawer with nothing to do.

Q: I didn't realize that.

RIDGWAY: They gave her the Iberian Peninsula and whatever, but took away from it all political-military functions, all functions related to European economics. They took all of the Atlantic stuff out of it and there she sat with whatever few issues were around, and she sat for a year, and she retired at 51. I mean, just a tremendous loss to the Service.

Q: Wasn't she in Brussels with MacArthur?

RIDGWAY: Yes.

Q: That was before Norway.

RIDGWAY: Years. And she was in London.

Q: I used to go see her when I visited London in the economic bureau. She is an old friend. I talk to her every time we go to Maine. I'll be talking to her this summer.

RIDGWAY: But she is not the kind of talent that should have left the Service at age 50. And when she finally told Bill Macomber that she was leaving, she didn't have a job, and she didn't feel like sitting around, and there were things she could do in Maine or

whatever, that would at least be more satisfying, I think his major complaint was that she was messing up the statistics for women because this is 1970-71 and they were beginning to become aware of the challenge. As far as giving her a more meaningful job, that was not a part of it. She was just going to spoil the statistics.

Q: Bill Macomber is a very peculiar person—his attitudes towards the administration.

RIDGWAY: And at that time there was what we now call the glass ceiling. It occurred to people that what they were doing, just as the rotation program ended when I went to Manila, the other end of somebody's career, when they finally became Deputy Assistant Secretary, something respectable, something the Service would see as really at the heart of things, before she took the job they reorganized all of the guts out of it. She didn't need it. So she left. But that's how I ended up in Oslo. It was sort of packaged ahead of time that if there was a position in Oslo, I would go out as political officer. That was not an easy assignment. My NATO experience was very good, Norway had its plebiscite on NATO while I was there. We had a large MAAG group in Oslo because the Norwegians were buying F-5s. We had an obstructionist air force major general who was not about to agree that the ambassador had any authority. So I learned a lot about political-military.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

RIDGWAY: That was Tibbetts. Tibby and subsequently Phil Crowe, a political appointee.

Q: I knew Phil Crowe also, in Ceylon.

RIDGWAY: I was with Phil Crowe for a year. Oslo, for me, was mostly a personal growing up time; a very lonely post, and as you know, some of the seasons there can be very depressing, and with not enough work to do.

Q: I've been to Oslo in January.

RIDGWAY: January is a delight compared to November. How do you learn then to deploy your own inner resources in building a life in a place that is not warm and friendly and enfolding? I learned how to do it, but I would say that of all of my service, those three years in Oslo were the roughest, because it was not as directly involved as the RPM job had been. It was a family post, and if you were a single officer you didn't go home at night to spouse and kiddies and a family life...

Q: But everybody else did.

RIDGWAY: There wasn't anything else to do. Some of the friends I made in Oslo have remained some of my best friends. In fact it was so bad there that I broke down and learned bridge which I had resisted. That was it. In fact I arrived in Oslo and was met at the airport by someone who said, “It's not an easy post...

—end Tape 1, side A.—begin Tape 1, Side B.

RIDGWAY: ...we ski, we play bridge, and we make rugs.” And I said, “I don't do any of those things, and I'm not about to.” Well, at the end of my assignment, of course, I skied, I played bridge, and I had made rugs. You do those things.

Q: I never heard about the rugs.

RIDGWAY: Yes, Tibby made lots of rugs, those are those lovely Scandinavian ryijy rugs. And I found that one way to learn Norwegian was to sit in front of the TV with the Norwegian news, and various programs in Norwegian on, and make rugs, because once you got to a line that was 45 knots of the same thing you could tie knots and have Norwegian going through your brain, and you could combine any number of things. So I got through it, and did a lot of personal growing up. That's how I remember it.

Q: That was '67.

RIDGWAY: No, that was '67 to '70. Tibby was, again, just a wonderful leader. Her skills were so much larger than the challenge in Norway. She could have done everything at that embassy by herself. John Bovey was the DCM, a wonderful man. And the two of them saw to it that appropriate amounts of work reached all the way down.

Q: Who was the DCM?

RIDGWAY: John Bovey. He's a WE hand and was in Paris. When I got there the long-time labor government was out of office for the first time in 30 years. There was a conservative coalition in, and my assignment was to keep track of the labor government—the labor party. The result—obviously you take these things in your career, they happen to everybody—but the result is at the end of my career, when labor governments have once again come back, these are all people now of my own age who were junior labor party people at the time. They were the group that I entertained. She saw to it that you got a share of the representation. Again, you hear horror stories coming from other posts where there's not enough to do, you couldn't get any representation, you never got to meet anybody, but in Oslo we all got a piece of the action.

Q: Tibby was always fair, wasn't she?

RIDGWAY: Very fair. It may have driven her nuts. She used to go out and walk up and down the street because she didn't have enough to do so she'd go for long walks or something. The rest of us had things to do and learned.

Q: You must know Mrs. Brundtland then?

RIDGWAY: Very well.

Q: I knew her father.

RIDGWAY: Did you really?

Q: He was Minister of Defense. And when I had Scandinavia they didn't like the mix of airplanes they were getting from us in NATO and he came over and I helped him, in effect, negotiate with McNamara for a different mix of airplanes, which worked out very nicely. He was a delightful man, absolutely delightful.

RIDGWAY: He was Defense Minister then, wasn't he?

Q: He was Defense Minister, yes. He's a medical doctor.

RIDGWAY: I also knew her husband because Arne Brundtland was at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and again, junior officers get those institutions that are on the fringe of government relations. But it was very good.

I came home in '70. Really, I found in the spring of 1970 I didn't recognize my own country. And I'm not going to tell you that I was among the early believers that Vietnam was wrong, and all of the rest. I did my bit about making the speeches, and I think that I genuinely believed, and was raised in the idea that...the domino theory and all the rest, whatever. By '69 and '70 I certainly had reached the conclusion that whatever was right or wrong in Vietnam didn't matter as much to me as to what was happening in our country. And the spring of 1970 was Kent State. I can't tell you how tough...you may have been overseas yourself at the same time.

Q: I was at Columbia University at that point. It was very interesting, don't think we didn't have the shock waves.

RIDGWAY: And if you're overseas though, and you're representing the United States and the front page is dead bodies at Kent State, and you're supposed to go out with talking points as to how all of this is either to be discounted, or is the fault of the kids, I couldn't do it. I was offered an opportunity to take home leave and return for a year, and then have direct transfer, or whatever, and I said, “I want to go home.” By this time, while my career had picked up steam, because I was not a water walker, believe me, at the beginning of

my career—it took me six years to get two promotions—but I was an FSO-4, I was 35 years of age, and I would normally have been competing for a job in EUR on a desk; but desk officers in EUR at the time, before we began to sort of mess up those positions, tended to be more senior and the junior desk officers were more junior. So I was right in the middle where I wasn't going to fit comfortably.

So Joan Clark called. She and Tibby had consulted back in Washington. Joan Clark called, and she, at that time Executive Director of ARA, said, “There really is nothing good for you in EUR. In many respects you're too senior, or not senior enough, and there's just nothing. But I can get you a job as a desk officer for Ecuador, and I would recommend that you take it.” And I said, “Fine.” I mean I had no reason again to think the system was pushing me off in one dead end or another. The system was really working the way it was supposed to. So I took the job as desk officer for Ecuador. If you ask John Hugh Crimmins, he doesn't like to remember that he fought the assignment on the grounds that I didn't know anything about Latin America, had never served, and how could I be a desk officer?

Q: Those ARA guys are so defensive. It's ridiculous.

RIDGWAY: Yes. And Joan meanwhile was trying to explain that what they needed was a set of Washington skills. So what if I had never served in ARA, they needed someone who knew Washington, and knew how to get along.

Q: And still take care of the embassy.

RIDGWAY: ...and still take care of the embassy. So I went back to the Ecuador desk. And as in '64, I then had another sort of career altering experience because the Ecuador desk had this wonderful little thing called a tuna war.

Q: Called a what?

RIDGWAY: A tuna war, where for 25 years the American tuna fleet fishing off shore was having its vessels seized, and a complex of things that one doesn't have to go into here. It was also a very busy summer, and it was Allende in Chile in the summer of '70 if you recall. The office that I was in was Ecuador-Peru-Bolivia-Chile. John Fisher and Bill Stedman were the leadership of the office. Again, fine, fine people.

Q: I knew John Fisher.

RIDGWAY: ...and they had to give all of their attention to the Chile thing and the Allende election. As a result they could not take the seat that their position traditionally had held in the annual attempt to resolve the tuna problem, in a conference that was called the "Quadripartite Conference", of Ecuador, Peru, Chile, hosted by Argentina. So I was then identified as the person, since they were busy, who would go in September to Argentina with Don McKernan, who was that time in the position called S/FW—Special Assistant to the Secretary for International Fisheries and Wildlife. So I went off to Buenos Aires, the first woman who had ever appeared on that fisheries scene, in Don McKernan's delegation; way at the end of the table; totally suspect, being from ARA and all of that kind of thing; and watched a master negotiator. And as his confidence in me increased he gave me tasks that were even larger. By December of 1970 for reasons that are an economic history of their own, the U.S.-Ecuador tuna war exploded. And instead of having two fishing boats seized a year, between December 1970 and March 1971 there were 51. It was an out and out war. And my little desk became command central. For people trying to understand the issue, for Congress, for American interests other than fisheries, which were being caught up in this, completely destroyed...

Q: ____? [background noise]

RIDGWAY: Yes. Gulf Oil wanted to know what was happening. I mean I'd never heard of a SEC-10K, and all of that kind of thing. But as investors were writing in other SEC brochures, they then had to put in a completely different political assessment. So they

were calling, “What is the problem, the political assessment?” The OAS became involved. Jack Irwin was deputy Secretary at the time. I had to go down to the OAS and help respond to the charge that U.S. retaliation was a violation of article 17 of the Rio Treaty, economic aggression, because we'd cut off aid, and the Ecuadorians then threw out the military missions, so we cut off military sales, and we got into this terrible slugfest. The result of that was that I really became an extra cone in the Department, a fisheries wars specialist. By the end of three years, a combination of two years on the Ecuador desk, and one year in the office of Latin American policy planning, I became the expert on the combination of American interests in fisheries disputes. Don McKernan remained the master of fisheries interests, and Jack Stevenson remained the master of law, and the Navy and the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs remained masters of all of the interests involved in maritime territorial seas and freedom of international straits. But for somebody who had to put it together, who had to worry about relationships with a total region, who had to worry about the legitimate interests in fish of the American industry, the legitimate interests of OSD and maritime transit, in Jack Stevenson's big law of the sea initiatives, I was the only one around. Special interests had their own office. Nobody was being asked to put it together except ARA, and in ARA, as the result of being there when the war broke out, I was it.

Q: As I recall the issue was, very largely, they tried to enforce the extra territorial reach of the Latin American governments.

RIDGWAY: That was part of it. But the other is that no other government, except the United States, intrudes itself into essentially private matters, and pronounces that private behavior can compromise an international legal position. To put it into plain language; we said we would not recognize 200 miles of coastal jurisdiction over economic resources. Obviously we have since come to exactly that claim ourselves. The American industry said, “Well, if you don't recognize their jurisdiction, do we or do we not buy licenses?” The U.S. government decided that if the tuna industry bought licenses, it would compromise the U.S. position. So they got seized when they did not buy licenses. And they came to us

and said, “If they're going to seize us, you've got to protect us.” Congress said, “If they're doing all of this for the U.S. government, then you ought to reimburse them. But if you're going to reimburse them, then you ought not to be giving assistance to Ecuador at the same time.” So there came to be a body of legislation saying that for every dollar you reimburse a fisherman, you're going to cut the AID program. You can imagine how Latins responded.

Japanese faced the same problem. The government said to their industry, “What you do or you don't do is your business. Your purchase of licenses has nothing to do with our view of what is or is not the correct international legal position.” And most other governments did that. We got ourselves tied in terrible knots.

Q: The legal position on the law of the sea has produced a lot of unforeseen results.

RIDGWAY: That's right, and unnecessary conflict. We couldn't get our act together. By the middle part of '73 I'm doing fishery disputes for all of Latin America, from a position as deputy director for Latin America policy planning which introduced me to the whole hemisphere. Once again I was having trouble with the system in terms of its judgment about my career future, because here I was doing fish and all that kind of stuff. Remember the career counselors back the old days? Not the new batch.

Q: I never paid any attention to them.

RIDGWAY: I was coming up for reassignment and I went down to the personnel people, and I said, “What's available?” And they said, “Nothing, but how about Director of the A-100 course?” And I said, “Of all of the people you could pick to be the next director of the A-100 course, I'm not the person.” “Well, that's the best we have, and we think it's very appropriate for you.” I said, “I'm not interested.” And I also had, by this time, from outside the Department, offers from all over town to go somewhere else because they'd gotten to know me then.

Q: Of course. You do the job and people notice it.

RIDGWAY: One day I got a telephone call from Ron Spiers saying, “Roz, I'm being named to be the first American ambassador to an independent Bahamas, and you are the only Foreign Service officer I know who has done personnel, consular work, public correspondence, management. I've been POL-MIL Counselor in London, I need somebody who's been everything else.” So do you count all of those years of slow promotions as an advantage or a disadvantage? And, Ron asked, “Would you be my DCM?” I said, “Sure, I'd love to be the DCM.” I went down with Ron in '73 to be DCM.

Q: I served with Ron in London, I know him pretty well.

RIDGWAY: And, as you know after a year in the Bahamas, when Elliot Richardson became Ambassador to the UK, Ron was asked to give up his ambassadorial title, and go be DCM in London and that's what he did. Then I stayed on and Sey Weiss came.

Q: That's right, he went back to London.

RIDGWAY: Yes, Ron went back as Minister. So I stayed on and I did two years in the Bahamas, got a notice from the Department (by then I was an FSO-3 finally, having been about five years as an O-4. Again, people look at the end of my career and say, “Water walker.” But they forget how young I was when I came in, so they forget how many years it took me to move up)—a telegram telling me I'd been assigned to the National War College, and I guess I was supposed to fall all over myself with gratitude. But instead I came back to Washington and I said, “Look, I don't need instruction in POL- Mil affairs. I can read ranks. I know staff sergeants from PFCs and Lieutenants Colonel from Majors. I know all of that stuff. Why don't you send me to the Senior Seminar?” “You don't have the grade. You're only an O-3.” I said, “Be that as it may, I don't need the National War College. I've had three years in RPM, and three years in Norway doing POL-MIL stuff.” So, sure enough, they got me into the Senior Seminar, to enter in September of '75. It

always seems to be airline strikes that affect my career, Bill, because I left the Bahamas then and I stopped off in Sarasota to see a very dear friend of mine, who only recently had retired from the Foreign Service; played a few days of golf; and darned if Eastern Airlines didn't go on strike. So I missed the opening day of the Senior Seminar, and I missed the class picture. I arrived on the second day and when we took our first break there was a telephone call, “Please call Carlyle Maw,” he was the Under Secretary for Management. At lunch, I called Carlyle Maw's office, and I was told that he wanted to have lunch with me. I had lunch with Carlyle Maw the next day. He said, “As you know, S/FW is now something called the Office of Oceans, Environment and Science, and Ambassador Tom Clingan—who had replaced Don McKernan—Clingan came in from the University of Miami, it was always filled from the outside. Tom had sort of had it, he'd returned to the University of Miami, and there was a vacancy at a very key time. Congress was going crazy. By then they wanted 200 miles coastal jurisdiction and they were getting ready to pass legislation, and the Law of the Sea conference wasn't going well. And State needed someone with experience. They pushed the computer button and who did they have in the Foreign Service who had done fisheries wars, even down in the Bahamas on spiny lobster, and knew something about this area? It was Roz RIDGWAY. So would I please come and take a job. They were creating a Special Assistant in the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Science while they continued their search for a replacement for Tom Clingan. And I said no.

People wonder over the course of my career how I got by with some of these things. I'm such a conformist, I guess, that I surprise myself sometimes when I realize what I did. But I just said no, I didn't want to do it.

Q: I've turned down two major jobs that I did not understand...

RIDGWAY: And you got by with it.

Q: I was offered Economic Minister in Japan when I was in Ottawa, and I said, "No way. I've been to Japan, I don't like it." And I was offered Economic Minister and head of AID mission in Brazil, and I said, "I don't know anything about Brazil, I don't speak Portuguese, this is the wrong job for me."

RIDGWAY: I thought this was bad for me, and so a tug of war began. The system reeled in shock that I'd said no to Carlyle Maw. Larry Eagleburger, who was in the Department at that time called, and I said, "I don't want it." A few people in the Senior Seminar class, who thought about it, said, "Over the long run, Roz, you're going to lose because they'll simply write the orders, and you're going to be out of the Senior Seminar, and you're going to be over there. So why don't you structure it differently? Why don't you describe the circumstances under which you would take the job." So, sure enough, Larry Eagleburger called on a Thursday—I was staying with friends waiting to get into an apartment that I owned—and said, "Roz, I mean to tell you we're not going to put up with this much longer. You've simply have got to agree to take the job. I don't want to order you, but you're forcing me to order you." And I said, "Larry, let me tell you something. I don't want to be Special Assistant to a vacancy. I really don't like the notion. That has happened to so many women in the Service that I have known. It's sort of being the librarian in the back room. I really don't want that." And he said, "We think we have a couple of good candidates now, we hope to know by Monday who will be that person, and then you won't be just Special Assistant to a vacancy." And I said, "Why don't you offer me the job as ambassador for Oceans and Fisheries?" "Well, the industry..." I said, "I've got news for you. I've worked with the industry now for five years, I think I would be competitive with any other candidate you have, if you put it before the industry, and on the Hill." He called me on Monday and said, "Roz, you were right. The industry wants you, and the Congress would be very happy." I said, "Fine, then I will go to that job as Ambassador."

So I left the Senior Seminar, the picture never having been taken, and three weeks after I arrived at the Seminar in the autumn of 1975, I became Deputy Assistant Secretary for

Oceans and Fisheries Affairs, and in February of '76 had my hearings on the Hill and became Ambassador for Oceans and Fisheries Affairs. A lot of people say, “dead end”, it won't take you anywhere, but in fact it was a wonderful job at a very, very key time.

Q: How long were you in that job?

RIDGWAY: Until the spring of '77. The administration changed. I had 13 months with a very bright hard-working team of people, I should say “we”, had rewritten 25 years of international agreements based upon 12 miles ocean jurisdiction to incorporate the legislative claim to 200, when the world hadn't yet gone there, mostly because we had been trying to hold the world back and they changed our view suddenly. And in order to prevent conflict we went out and sat everybody down at the table and said, “If you want to fish off our coasts, no matter what existing international law might say, you should have an international agreement with us.” In 13 months we did something like 19 bilateral agreements. We redid all the international commissions—for the North Atlantic fisheries and all those others, they all disappeared, they were all renegotiated. In the spring of 1977 I could see the renewal of those agreements coming up, but there was a new administration and I said, “That's it. I want an embassy. I want out of the fishing industry.” I just couldn't face a re-run of '75-'77.

So in March of '77 I talked with Carol Laise, Bob Brewster, people like that who were involved in personnel, and went to Finland as ambassador in July of '77.

Q: You were in Finland autumn of '77.

RIDGWAY: July of '77.

Q: I hadn't known or heard of you until I went to Finland on a visit in '78, and talked to the Finnish branch of the International Chamber of Commerce which I was then with. I asked people, “Who is our ambassador?” and they said, “Miss RIDGWAY, we haven't really

met her yet and we don't really know her very well." I was always busy with Chamber of Commerce matters and I simply didn't bother embassies in those days.

RIDGWAY: It was a great time. I loved it.

Q: I had my R&R in Finland from Moscow 1940 in between the wars. How long were you in Finland?

RIDGWAY: Three years, actually two and a half years—from July of '77 to February of 1980 at which time the Department called me back to be Counselor.

Q: Yes, I remember that. How did you get along with the Finns?

RIDGWAY: Beautifully. I mean I am today a daughter of Finland, and Finland is my second "home" and we, the Finns and I, both feel mutual affection and mutual regard. And I have great respect for the Finns and what they're trying to do for foreign policy. I learned a lot about representing the economic interests of the United States before it became fashionable to talk about economic interests (make a lot of contacts). I enjoyed it immensely.

Q: A lot of people I know in intelligence have been very distressed over time by the Finns' arrangements to sell specialized ships and a lot of other things to the USSR, but everybody recognizes that the Finns were so ingenious as to turn the reparation requirement into an economic development project that they don't really argue with it.

RIDGWAY: Of course, they've gone broke now.

Q: Have they gone broke?

RIDGWAY: They've gone broke and they're the subject of major law suits by Carnival Cruise Lines. It's sort of the current scandal.

Q: Really. That's too bad, because they were first class people, I thought. It was a specialized market because about the only people who can afford those ships anymore are the Taiwanese.

RIDGWAY: The cruise business is terrific, but they mismanaged their cruise business in ways I don't entirely understand. They got into some contracts that they expected to meet by having the continuation of government subsidies in certain areas. The government subsidies were withdrawn, they couldn't complete the contracts. Carnival Cruise Lines didn't care whether the Finns were nice people in blue helmets or not, they wanted their money or their ships, and they are suing. The cruise line business in which Wartsila was the best in the world, would have kept them going if they had managed properly, but it got mismanaged.

Q: I'm about to take a cruise on a Finnish ship—the North Cape Cruise from Copenhagen. I handled Scandinavian affairs when Carl Rowan was ambassador and then visited him there. I visited before him.

RIDGWAY: With all due respect to Carl Rowan, I and my successor, Jim Goodby, along with, I think, Tyler Thompson who was in at the end of the '60s, the three of us are the only career ambassadors Finland has seen. I don't know about Tyler Thompson's stewardship there. I can tell you when I arrived, the Finns were especially—grateful is the right word actually— at our desire to have a substantive conversation, continuing diplomatic substantive dialogue with them. They were a little tired of Finland described as saunas, and skiers, and people who pay their debts. They did not think that their Finnish foreign and security policy was completely understood, as it was not. I think that Jim and I between '77 and the summer of '81 when Jim left, gave them four years of a solid consultative process that they valued very much. It's such a small society that once the word gets out that you're interested, that you're dealing with them as equals in the foreign

policy sense— security policy, economic policy—then it goes through the whole society, and he and I both had superb experiences there and have kept the ties.

Q: When Carl was there, his predecessor was a career man who was not a very able ambassador. And the DCM was George Ingram who was a good career man, and George was totally frustrated with his career ambassador, and absolutely delighted with Carl Rowan when Carl turned up. They both came from Mississippi and color didn't matter a damn.

RIDGWAY: You have to be careful on these sorts of en masse judgments. The worst ambassador I ever served with was a career ambassador—let him be nameless—but it was a career ambassador.

Q: I had to solve a problem in Ireland where we had a political ambassador, of course, and his DCM and he didn't get along. Bill Tyler asked me to go out and investigate, which I did. Everybody expected me to come back and say that the political ambassador had grossly mistreated this DCM, who was a fine career man. I came back with exactly the opposite judgment. I said the DCM didn't know how to do the job; he didn't know who was ambassador; he didn't know how to guide; and he was dishonest with the ambassador. So he ended up being assigned to the Army Staff College and that was his last assignment because it was a contemptible performance on this guy's part. But people didn't expect that answer.

RIDGWAY: You have to be fair, and tell it the same on both sides.

Q: You've got to get it right. I served under a political ambassador in Canada who was a former Congressman, and he was an absolute delight of a guy, Wigglesworth. So you can't generalize about these things at all. Paul Robinson when he was ambassador in Canada, the staff thought he was great. When I visited there; I was with CIA at that point; and he thought they were great. It reminds me and also relates to the story. One time Bill Tyler and I were called upon by the Irish ambassador, who said he understood that our current

ambassador was leaving the post, and he would like to present the official request of the Irish government that we recognize that Ireland is part of Europe; that we appoint a career man who was an expert on European affairs to be our ambassador in Ireland.

RIDGWAY: One of the few governments that will make it official. Most of the others try to deliver that message sub rosa or something else, and unless they're willing...

Q: This was absolutely dead on.

RIDGWAY: And did we do it?

Q: Bill Tyler and I both looked at him, and both of us would have loved to have the job, and we said, "Sorry, no dice. It ain't going to happen, that's all. That isn't the way things work. You'll have to put up with it, but we'll try to always have a good DCM." The Irish ambassador was a good friend of mine... Then from Finland you went to East Germany?

RIDGWAY: No, I was Counselor. There were three years between Finland and...

Q: That was when Muskie was...

RIDGWAY: First it was Cy Vance, and then Muskie.

Q: What did you get to do when you were Counselor?

RIDGWAY: I was not appointed, it turned out, to do anything. I was appointed to be a token. Lucy Benson Wilson had been the Under Secretary for Science and Technology. Then she left, I think they did not like Lucy's style. They realized that with this big commitment they had with affirmative action, that they had to have a picture of another woman, so they were prepared to have another woman on the seventh floor, but they were not prepared to have her do anything. I have since on a number of occasions given speeches to women saying, "Never take a token job unless you have a token mind." The difficulty is knowing it is a token job, and I did not realize that I was to be simply a picture

on an organization chart. Before I arrived, major questions involving Cyprus and Northern Ireland were taken away from the Counselor's position; the designated car was taken away from the Counselor's position; and the Counselor was removed from the Secretary's regular daily staff meeting. So I will tell you that that was the most miserable year of my life.

Q: Well, it must have been awful.

RIDGWAY: I had a fancy office. Now what do you do in those circumstances? You pick up what's left. To give you two examples: I still had Eastern Europe. I've been lucky with building blocks that people didn't realize were building blocks. Eastern Europe; the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which was just organizing for the 1980 Madrid meeting; selection and of briefing the delegation; bringing on delegation leadership with Max Kampelman, all that kind of thing; traveling around Europe to talk about our objectives at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, working the inter-agency scene to get a position. Nobody was paying any attention to those things. It was only in 1989 that most big policy makers discovered the Helsinki process and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I, as Counselor, saw the Eastern Europeans who wanted to engage in political consultation and also traveled to Eastern Europe. And then there were people in the Department who were desk officers for very little countries, very tiny countries, whose leaders would come to Washington and could not get received on the seventh floor. So these officers were folks who knew me, and said, “Look, you've got an office with panel and all the rest, will you meet Eugenia Charles?” So I would meet Eugenie Charles. “Will you meet Tom Adams of Barbados?” “Of course.” David Newsom as Under Secretary understood. So David would be the one who would host the Blair House dinner for the meeting of the heads of the Caribbean states, and would ask me if I would come. David and I would be the only two career people up there, we were the ones who understood this and who did all of these things.

So I did what I could. I did the Pacific area. There were still battles going on in fisheries affairs, and people still weren't paying any attention to them. Tom Pickering was the Assistant Secretary for OES and he would ask my help. George Vest was Assistant Secretary for Europe and he would ask my help on Eastern Europe and the CSCE. The Latin American people sought my help. So I lasted for about a year and then the election came. It was a miserable year in terms of waking up to tokenism and being quite shocked by it. I think the people who did it to this day count themselves as great proponents of affirmative action. But frankly it was a scandal.

Q: It was a sham. That was which years?

RIDGWAY: I arrived on the 20th of February 1980 and I was asked to vacate my office on the 21st of January 1981. McFarlane replaced me as Counselor, Al Haig came in. And I had no job. So I went home, and I was resurrected in very short order. The President's first summit meeting was in Canada. Reagan was to go to Canada in March of 1981—March 10th and 11th. The Canadian Foreign Minister came to town to see Al Haig to prepare for the meeting, and I don't know what Al Haig thought was going to be the case with these big foreign policy issues but Alan McEachan walked in and said to Al Haig, “Unless the problem of Georges Bank scallops is solved, this is going to be a disastrous summit and might just as well not take place.” Well, you know, Haig didn't know anything about scallops, and cod, and hake and all that stuff, so he had a staff meeting—which I've since learned about—and was boiling mad. He found the issue hardly serious, and yet this messy little issue was getting in the way of grand statecraft, and who the hell knew anything about scallops? Walt Stoessel, who was Deputy Secretary, spoke up and said, “We do have an officer who knows those things.” “Well, where is he.” “She was sent home, doesn't have a job. Roz Ridgway.” “Get her back.” So I went back and said, “I've got to have an office.” I took my secretary, who was also bounced at the time I was, and we went down the 2 corridor on the seventh floor and we did two things. One, we were given an office to carry out this quick negotiation of this terrible tangle that fisheries had gotten into

with Canada. Two of these new people coming in with Haig wanted fancy offices. Dick Kennedy our nuclear man now, was the Under Secretary for Management. He had this grand floor plan, and everybody was walking in saying, “I want this, and I want this, and I want this.” He asked, “Roz, would you help me out? I want to draw you in as occupying all of these offices down the corridor.” So I moved into a little suite of offices down the corridor, and for his purposes blocked them from all of this clamor, and for my purposes had an office from which to work on the Canada thing. It was tough, I got it done in three months; I was on the road a lot; I worked the Hill, used all of my old ties. We got the thing resolved.

Q: This was beginning in?

RIDGWAY: 1981, the end of January of '81. I was given between January 26th and March 9th to mastermind the retrieval of the treaty that was hung up in the Senate, that the Canadians had already passed through in Parliament. It never should have been negotiated. It was a disaster.

Q: The most idiotic treaty I've ever read. I read the whole thing.

RIDGWAY: Part was substance and the other part was how it had been done.

Q: Oh, I know, but the substance was no good either.

RIDGWAY: I happen to think the substance was all right.

Q: It was all right, but it was an agreement to agree basically.

RIDGWAY: It was an agreement to manage fish without a line, but for political strategic purposes, to go get a line from the World Court. And the American industry really did not like the notion of managing the fish without a line. They wanted the Court to draw a line and they would fish in accordance with that line. They didn't really care about having access to the broader resource. As it turned out they were wrong then, but that's what they

wanted done. Something else was negotiated and you couldn't get it through the Senate and it had been hanging around for the damndest time. So I worked with the Canadians to help them without embarrassment to cancel that order in Parliament, and to kill the thing in the Senate, and to split the management treaty off from the agreement to go to the World Court for a boundary line, and got it all done by the 9th of March.

Q: I wondered who did that. I knew it was done.

RIDGWAY: I did that.

Q: I didn't know you did it. It was very important to do in terms of relations, absolutely vital.

RIDGWAY: It was about ten weeks, and I got it done, at the end of which, of course, nobody wanted to see me around. Yet there I was, I was in the career service, and on the payroll, so I continued to occupy that office and didn't have a damn thing to do. That's all something else. I probably should have quit the Service at that point but I was so startled to find that these things could happen that I just didn't react.

Anyway, there was an opportunity to pick up another old issue which was the settlement of the Czech gold claims. I had seen some of them as Counselor so I named myself the negotiator for that, and for the rest of '81 and into February of '82 negotiated the settlement for the return of the gold to Czechoslovakia in return for the settlement of the claims.

People asked me to sit on promotion panels. It was a dreadful time, a very, very bad time. I was named as ambassador to East Germany in October of '82, a long time after the administration had changed. I went to East Germany in January of '83. The only thing that happened, Bill, I mean something good comes out of most of these things although I don't mean to sound like Pollyanna, but I realized, as may have been the case with a lot of people, man or woman, married or unmarried, that I had married the Foreign Service. But it was a one-way marriage. The Foreign Service hadn't married me. And when trouble came—you'd be surprised how you become invisible to people you thought were friends—

they value their careers so much that if they see you coming down a corridor they will turn and go the other way because they're not sure whether its good to be seen with you or not. And you find that your world of hundreds of friends is in fact very few people. And you find that, in fact, you are responsible for your life. The Foreign Service is not a marriage. I looked up to find this very wonderful fellow, who had been a part of my life for many years as a good friend. We started dating in 1981—I had some free time—I realized that a divorce was impending from the Foreign Service, in terms of intellectual and emotional ties and I got my personal life straight and I had this wonderful man in it. So we married, and have been married since then. So that sort of thing came out of it.

Then I went to East Germany, and then I came back to finish this particular theme, and by the end of '88, the beginning of the new administration in '89, the six months of working with the new administration I had the confidence to say, “This has been the highlight, these four years with Reagan and Shultz, and even the six months introducing the Bush and Baker people. I'm not likely to ever have this kind of creative opportunity again, and I'm not going to take second best intellectually.”

Q: You came back from Germany in...

RIDGWAY: In '85.

Q: And you became Assistant Secretary then, and you were there...

RIDGWAY: July of '85 to June 30, 1989. So I left. I could see the other coming again. I knew what it was like when you have to make work. The Foreign Service had no obligation to manage my life, I was going to have to manage it from the lesson I had learned...

Q: That was a lesson.

RIDGWAY: ...I had learned in '81, and I decided I had other priorities.

Q: It is quite a story. The point of disjuncture between administrations is well made. I mean it started with your coming back in '77 to a job which was tagged as political, and then '77...

RIDGWAY: In '80 you mean.

Q: '80, yes, and then you're immediately out, because the election goes the other way. regardless of the fact that you're a career person. I was in the career service as a civil servant in the economic bureau when the Eisenhower administration came in and it was a traumatic experience all around. In the end I got to be very friendly with Doug Dillon and I worked with him, and I worked with Foster Dulles. And I was very happy with him and I thought Foster Dulles did a fine job, treated me beautifully, and I had no complaints.

RIDGWAY: Well, and they all think that they've discovered you. The very same Reagan administration, which wouldn't touch me in the spring of '81, was marching me out in public in 1986 and '87 as sort of their creation after the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit where I was the briefer, and at television interviews, and all of this as if they had created me. Forget the 25 years preceding, and indeed forget the year in which you're sort of bouncing around in purgatory. I never minded that. I just was not really prepared...

End of interview